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24 PAGES OF VIRUS NEWS & COMMENT

'A critical period' as Canadian rate of infection increasing

Elderly in Italy could be left to die if hospitals overwhelmed

Outbreak likely to linger until August, Trump now says

CANADA BARS ENTRY TO MOST FOREIGN NATIONALS

NATHAN DENETTE / THE CANADIAN PRESS

Anyone with symptoms of the virus will not be allowed to board a flight to Canada, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said.

Americans, immediate family exempt

RYAN TUMILTY

Canada is closing its doors to the world by severely restricting international flights, a move the government rejected just days ago, but is now embracing in a sign of just how quickly the coronavirus crisis is escalating.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced the sweeping travel restrictions Monday at a press conference outside Rideau Cottage, where he and his family have been in isolation, since his wife, Sophie Grégoire Trudeau, contracted the virus last week.

Starting Wednesday, all international visitors to Canada will be turned around at the airport, with the exception of Americans, diplomats and flight crews.

"We will be denying entry to Canada to people who are not Canadian citizens or permanent residents," said Trudeau, who added anyone coming back to the country needs to self isolate for 14 days.

The American border will remain open and there is currently no plan to restrict domestic flights. Canadians and permanent residents will be allowed to return home, but have been warned to do so quickly.

"Canadian travellers should return to Canada via commercial means while it's still possible to do so. Let me be clear: if you're abroad, it's time for you to come home," said Trudeau.

Family members of Canadian citizens and permanent residents will also be allowed to come home.

Trudeau said the government would also mandate that airlines would have to do a basic health assessment of anyone travelling, including citizens, and anyone who might have the virus will not be allowed to travel to Canada.

"Anyone who has symptoms will not be able to come to Canada."

As of Monday, Canada had 407 confirmed cases, while there were more than 175,000 cases worldwide.

See MEASURES on A4

COMMENT

Airport chaos does little to inspire trust

CHRIS SELLEY

In times of crisis in Canada, there are always pundits and commentators available to tell us how well our governments are faring, and how silly it would be to doubt them. All those anti-crisis measures other countries are pursuing, but we aren't? They are overreacting. And when we wind up pursuing those same measures a few days later, and it's very difficult to understand why it wouldn't have been better to pursue them earlier? Ah, well, this is what the experts have advised. We are taking things "step by step," as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Monday. Canadians do not take more than one step at once. That is for the hotter-blooded nations.

It feels like tempting fate. Canadians aren't badly governed in any relative sense. But consider all the things Canadian governments are capable of screwing to death: buying military equipment, rolling out a public transit smart card, creating a database of rifles and their owners, paying their employees. At the moment we're meant to trust them with advanced epidemiology — and as we saw Sunday, they can't even run an airport properly.

See SELLEY on A6

Ex-minister sends SOS to Ottawa

STRANDED ON CRUISE SHIP

ADRIAN HUMPHREYS

A cruise ship with 146 Canadians among its 1,000 passengers is stranded in the Pacific Ocean as ports in South America refuse to let it dock because of COVID-19 fears.

Among the passengers is Art Eggleton, Canada's former minister of defence and minister for international trade who sent a personal alert to senior officials in Ottawa seeking assistance for the Canadians. Eggleton was a federal cabinet minister under Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and also mayor of Toronto for 11 years.

See STRANDED on A6

HANDOUT

Ports have refused to let the MS Marina, a luxury cruise ship, dock despite not having any cases of coronavirus.

"The Queen is trying to keep calm and carry on, but at nearly 94 they won't be taking any chances.

— A ROYAL SOURCE.
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